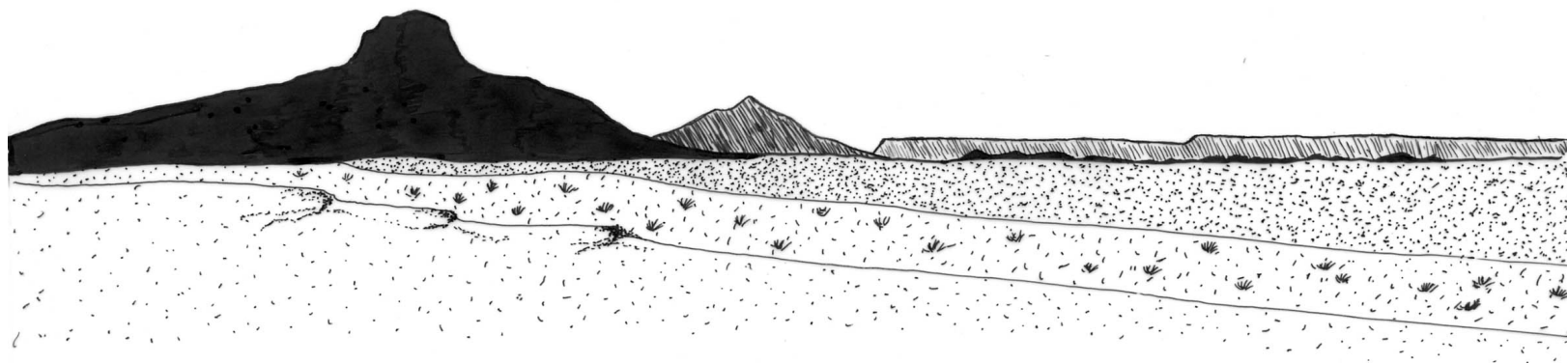


Cabazon Peak

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Albuquerque Field Office



CABEZON PEAK is a well-known local landmark in the Rio Puerco Valley. At 8,000 feet above sea level, it is the most prominent of approximately 50 volcanic necks found in the region that extends to Mount Taylor near Grants.

LEGEND:

The name "Cabazon" is derived from the Spanish noun "cabeza," meaning "head." Cabazon translates as "big head." The peak is believed to have religious significance for the Pueblo and Navajo Indians, and remnants of their visits still exist. The Navajos have various myths associated with Cabazon, one of which explains that the peak and local lava flows came from a giant who was slain upon Mount Taylor. The giant's head became Cabazon Peak and his blood congealed to form the Malpais, or "bad land" volcanic flow to the south.

GEOLOGY:

The region's volcanic necks formed when molten lava worked its way to the earth's surface through sedimentary rock layers deposited by an ancient inland sea that covered the area. Millions of years of erosion have removed much of the softer sedimentary rock, exposing the basalt columns or "necks."

RECREATION:

Cabazon, rising nearly 2,000 feet above the valley floor, is a popular area for rock climbing and scrambling. A visitor's register located on the summit indicates that hikers come from as far away as Europe to experience a climb that is considered appropriate for both beginning and intermediate-level skills.

A dirt road located on the west side of Cabazon leads to the trailhead. A primitive trail along the south side of the peak (refer to the map) takes between 4 and 6 hours to climb. The ascent of the chimney near the south-

east portion is marked by cairns. A hand line (special rope used by climbers) may be needed to ascend the rocky ledges to the top.

Because of loose rock, we recommend that you wear a hard hat and sturdy footwear for safety; also, take along plenty of water. A successful climb to the summit will reward you with an expansive view of the Rio Puerco Valley. You may want to bring a compass and map to locate and identify surrounding land formations.

PLANTS AND WILDLIFE:

Piñon and juniper trees are dispersed among the rock-strewn foothills of the peak. The desert floor offers numerous grasses, cacti, and shrubs. Summer showers encourage the blooms of sunflower, cactus flowers, evening primroses and asters.

Bird life at Cabazon includes meadow larks, jays, quail, doves, red-tailed hawks and sharp-shinned hawks. Area mammals include rabbits, prairie dogs, badgers, and rodents such as kangaroo rats, rock mice and pack rats. The elusive coyote is always present and serves to help keep the numbers of small mammals in balance.

Hikers should be aware that rattlesnakes are active during warmer months.



WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT:

The first area of public land specifically set aside to protect wilderness values was in 1924 in the Gila National Forest of New Mexico. According to the Wilderness Act of 1964, Wilderness should be used in ways that will leave it undamaged for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

The BLM is directed to preserve the wilderness values of the Cabezon Wilderness Study Area (WSA) for the long term. This involves protecting the area's special features and natural qualities, including outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Preserving wilderness values is a difficult task that requires a commitment from you as well as the BLM. The challenge for land managers lies

in making sure the use of other resources and activities within the WSA is compatible with its wilderness resource. The challenge for you is to use the area in harmony with the wilderness environment.

You do not need a permit to climb Cabezon Peak. However, permits are required for most uses other than primitive recreation, including mineral exploration, grazing, outfitting/guiding, commercial filming, and scientific research.

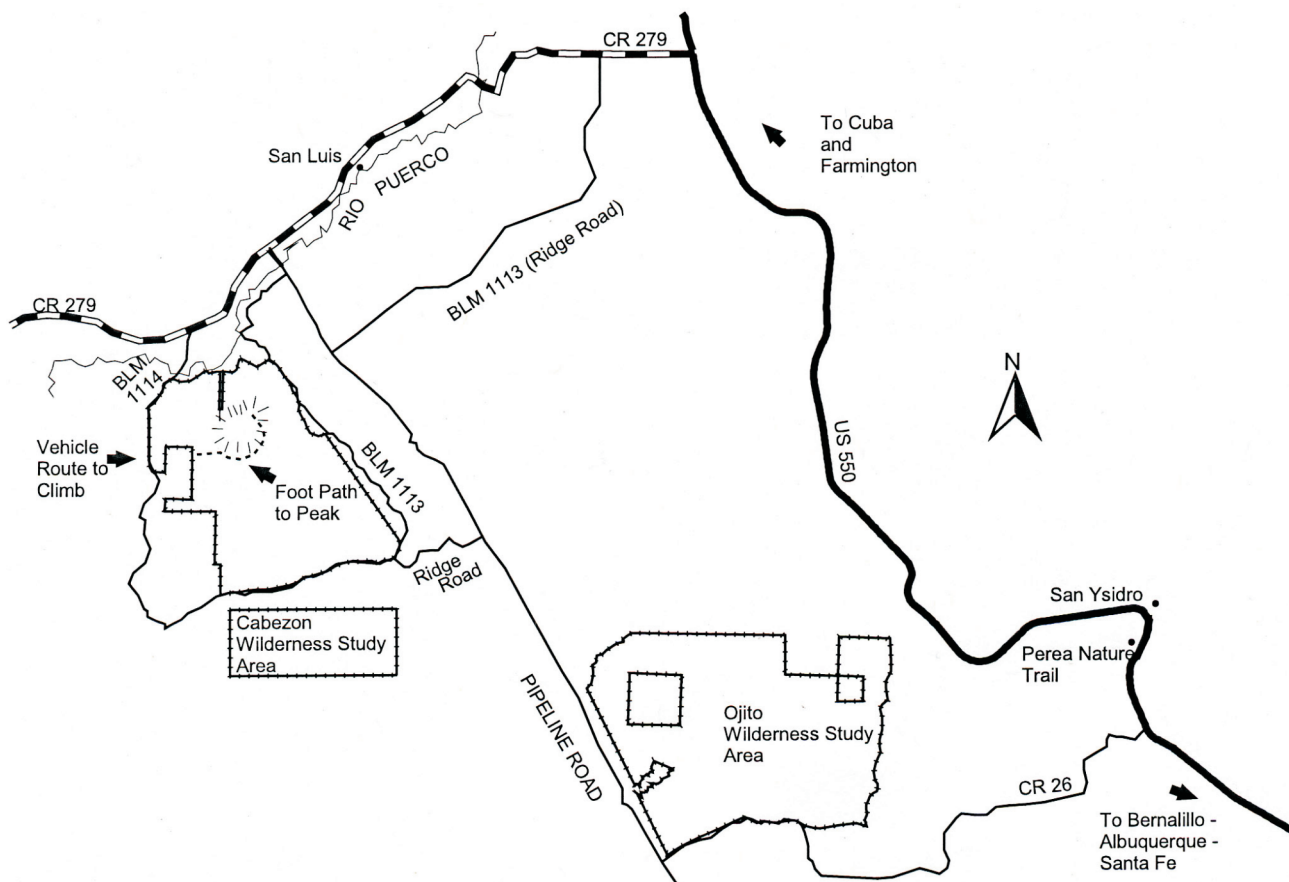
ACCESS:

Entry into the area is best gained by turning westward from US 550 onto CR 279 approximately 20 miles northwest of San Ysidro. A green highway sign (labeled "San Luis, Cabezon") marks

the turnoff. Continue 12 miles (southwest past the village of San Luis) to the Cabezon turn-off onto BLM Road 1114.

At this intersection of CR 279 and BLM 1114 you will pass by the ghost town of Cabezon. Follow BLM 1114 for 2.9 miles to the dirt route that leads east to the trailhead.

Travel on CR 279 and BLM 1114 is good during dry conditions but the roads can get slippery and rutted during the rainy season, normally in spring and late summer. During winter, the area can be unreachable. Check with the BLM about road conditions before your visit. Use of this area is regulated only to the extent needed to protect the resources and ensure your safety.



For More Information Contact:

Bureau of Land Management
Albuquerque Field Office
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107
(505) 761-8700
www.nm.blm.gov



Please practice Leave No Trace skills and ethics.

Information regarding Leave No Trace is available at the BLM office.